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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4362
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9450
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6350
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4395
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3203
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9990
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3294
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0381
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2373
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6907
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4754
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1375

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001596

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/28/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: AIR FORCE STRIKES TIGER BASES,
CONSOLIDATES GAINS AS CO-CHAIRS PUSH FOR TALKS

REF: A. COLOMBO 1564 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. COLOMBO CE 1588

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) On September 25-26, the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) struck LTTE training camps in the northwestern district of Mannar, according to the National Security Media Center (NSMC). On September 27, Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe told poloff that the SLAF had successfully struck a Sea Tiger base in northeastern Mullaitivu that afternoon. The pro-LTTE Tamilnet website claimed the strikes had hit civilian targets. Meanwhile, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) cadres fired mortars on a Security Task Force (STF) camp in Trincomalee district on September 28, according to the NSMC.

[1](#)2. (C) In a September 27 conversation, Brigadier Samarasinghe implied to Embassy Information Officer that the military intends to continue operations to consolidate its gains "before turning south," presumably to appease the southern nationalist parties. Sri Lanka Army Engineers operations officer Major General Mohan told poloff on September 28; "The LTTE's spirit has been broken" by the Sri Lanka military's victories since July 2006 (ref A), adding "They won't want to come to peace talks with their heads low."

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador Blake called on chiefs of the Air Force, Army and Navy on September 27. The Ambassador expressed the US Government's desire to help Sri Lanka defend itself in the war on terror, but stressed that we do not believe there is a military solution to the conflict and that we strongly support a negotiated settlement. Ambassador requested the chiefs to help us to help them by (a) exercising maximum restraint in not engaging in offensive military operations as the Co-Chairs try to nail down the date and venue for talks to begin; and (b) being very careful to avoid human rights violations. The Ambassador noted that recent human rights violations have garnered headlines in the US and that further violations could jeopardize exercises and other military cooperation (ref B).
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